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The Battle of London Life

Thomas O'Keefe, George Augustus Henry Sala,
1828–1895, George Augustus Sala, Charles Dickens

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J. F. Lewis

"Boz" in his Study

THE
BATTLE OF LONDON LIFE;

OR,

BOZ AND HIS SECRETARY.

BY MORNA. *pend.*

Thomas G. Keefe

WITH SIX DESIGNS ON STONE BY GEORGE SALA.

LONDON:
GEORGE PEIRCE, 310, STRAND.

1849.

LONDON :
GEORGE PHIRCE, 310, STRAND.

TO JOHN BULL.

IN this age of scribbling (for there never was a time in which men of *all degrees* of ability, of *every kind* of education, of *every profession*, hurried with such fearfully mad speed to *print*!) Writers, in their Dedications and Prefaces, use much eloquence to laud their patrons, and much seeming modesty to condemn themselves; or, at least, to apologise to the *literati* for the insufficiency of their productions. This is (*pardonnez le mot*) humbug, mere self-conceited arrogance and pride; and the more despicable, because, of all the various garbs *pride* puts on, that of crouching humility must ever appear, to honest John Bull, the most pitifully abject. Not to incur your dis-

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pleasure and censure, by such a sneaking dereliction of character and independence, we shall frankly tell you, that if you buy our book, we care not a rush whether you read it or not ; however, should curiosity induce you to do so, we advise you to make the most of a bad bargain with as much good humour as you can.

“Populus me sibi lat, at mihi plaudo.”

(BORROWED.)

Vide Notes to Pages 4, 7, 12, 61, and 77.

THE BATTLE OF LONDON LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

"FAUST.—In introducing us, do you assume the character of Wizard, or of Devil ?

"MEPHISTOPHELES.—In truth, I generally go about in strict incognito."

GOETHE'S FAUST.

BOZ AND HIS SECRETARY—CORRESPONDENCE—
SINGLE LIFE—THE BROWN GRENADE—THE
POLICE INSPECTOR—THE REPUBLICAN STRAN-
GLERS—THE SECRETARY OF LEGATION—&C.,
&C., &C.

THE illustrious Boz was lolling in his favourite crimson-cushioned library chair. His fixed gaze on the ceiling, and a certain pursed-up contraction of the nether lip, denoted that he was profoundly absorbed in thought ; or, in fact, busily engaged in a search after what Bulwer calls THE IDEAL !

B

The secluded, yet pleasant, situation of the apartment in which he sat (a sort of wing jutting out into, and communicating by French windows with, the lawn and gardens behind the house) rendered it admirably adapted for the *sanctum* of a man of letters; and though it was furnished with a little too much show and pretension to please a person of refined and correct taste, still the decorations were so evidently but a reflex, as it were, of the man's mind—the gorgeous oddities which met your view seemed to be in such perfect harmonization with certain well-known queer creations of his brain, that you felt there was, at all events, no affectation about the thing, and said to yourself, “What singularity! what eccentricity!” instead of, “What gaudiness! what gimcracks!” A noble collection of the best modern authors filled the tiers of bookshelves which were ranged from top to bottom of the walls on three sides of the apartment, and at a desk near the window, on the fourth side, a man was seated busily engaged in writing.

This man was our hero's amanuensis *PRO TEM.*, and as he is destined to play no inconsiderable part in our history, a *pen and ink* portrait of him, taken from life, may not be unacceptable.

His age seemed to range betwixt 45 and 50; probably nearer the latter than the former. A

tight-fitting black surtout, waistcoat, and trousers, all somewhat shabby, served to give to a tall and naturally slight figure, a still greater appearance of lean spareness. Old-fashioned drab ankle gaiters, which sat closely on a pair of excessively thick-soled shoes, and a very blue-white neckkerchief, showing off to no little advantage that small portion of the front of a very yellow-white shirt, which the close-buttoned vest left exposed to view, will complete the sketch of his visible personal integuments. His hair was iron-grey; and the short, stiff, stubbled style in which he wore it irresistibly attracted your attention to its immediate neighbour—a low, but very broad and square-cornered German sort of forehead. The eye-brows, strongly developed and meeting in front, gave a sinister cast to the features; and the flabby, drooping upper-lip, like the membrane which serves to veil the visual organs of certain reptiles, half concealed a small, but exceedingly brilliant, dark eye. His thin lips were absolutely colourless, and matched the deathlike tint of his meagre countenance so closely, that you sought the line of demarcation betwixt them in vain. This livid-facial mask struck you the more strangely, inasmuch as it maintained a most complete immoveability. Not a feature gave the slightest indication of life; and, had it not been

for the rapid movement of the fingers which held the pen, the figure of Mr. Phillipson, stooping over his desk, might have been taken for—for—for any sort of inanimate horror which the reader chooses to fancy ; we really are at a loss for an appropriate emblem !

A manuscript slang dictionary (for the compilation of which the illustrious Boz had paid the once-renowned Pierce Egan the handsome sum of one hundred guineas) lay open at the secretary's side : and, by its aid, he was transcribing and translating, from a language wholly unintelligible to all who did not possess such a key, certain passages written on a dirty sheet of paper ; in fact, a letter which had been sent that morning to his celebrated employer.

On the particular day which we have chosen for the opening of this true history, our hero had entered his library full three hours before our curtain drew up and discovered him to the reader. When he came in Mr. Phillipson had risen ; and, bowing with the most profound respect, had put his pen between his teeth, and rolled the favourite crimson arm-chair near the fire. Then reseating himself at the desk, he had returned to his task without uttering a single syllable.

Three hours, we repeat, had elapsed since this took place, and yet, during that time, not a word

had passed between them. The fingers of the sepulchral secretary's right hand had been moving to and fro with undiminished velocity, and the illustrious author, as we have described him in our opening lines, had been gazing in profound abstraction, with pursed nether lip, upon the ceiling in search of—the IDEAL.

At length, stretching himself uneasily on his seat, and partly waking from his reverie—"What next? what next?" broke from his lips in half-unconscious ejaculations. "H—is haunting me like the Cock-lane ghost, and B—is boring me like a bull-mastiff with his—'What next, what next?'"

"Since I've made the fortunes of these con-founded publishers," he continued, pettishly, "they grant me neither peace nor truce. To satisfy them, one must write, write, write for everlasting. It is a terrific bore! I hunt after subjects and ideas like a creditor after his debtor, a sheriff's officer after his victim, or Don Juan Cochrane or Feargus O'Connor after popularity; and my brain becomes as muddled, I get as stupid as the last five-act play, or a *séance* of the Royal Society, or the modern pilfered lucubrations—

"In knowledge that they may the more advance
Our *fast gents* copy the *worst* books of France."

While thus musing and muttering to himself, his eye happened, by chance, to fall upon Mr. Phillipson, who, we ought to inform our readers, was almost an entire stranger to him, having been recommended to the confidential post he at present occupied about our hero's person only a few days before ; his eye, we say, happened to fall on his amanuensis, and, after a moment's pause, the following colloquy occurred :—

“ Mr. Phillipson,” said the illustrious Quill.

“ Sir !” respectfully replied the Secretary, his hitherto statue-like features showing, for the first time, some signs of animation.

“ Have you deciphered and transcribed those letters ?”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ Do they contain anything of interest ?”

“ Scarcely anything.”

“ Let me hear.”

Mr. Phillipson took a large portfolio from the inside of his desk, and, as he produced the letters in question one by one from their recesses, the conversation proceeded as follows :—

“ This is a communication from a famous cracksman, commonly called ‘ *Singlefile*,’ who, it is currently reported, was concerned in the Rogers’ Bank affair. He merely says that he has lately read your ‘ OLIVER TWIST,’ and is highly delighted with it.”

" Ah, well ; go on."

" This comes from one Tony Smith, '*The Brown Grenadier* !' He pursues his profession as a swell-mob's-man, and intimates that he can put you '*fly*,' as he phrases it, to a clever trick or two, which would read well in a novel, if you have any idea of introducing that sort of thing in your next work."

" Go on."

" This packet is from an inspector of the metropolitan police."

" Aha !"

" He offers numerous documents for your use, and sends these as a sample."

" Good ! take a note of that."

" This letter is from a foreigner."

" From whence does it come ?"

" From Paris !"

" Well ?"

" The writer announces that he is at the head of a society, now in the course of formation, called '*The Stranglers*'—an European offshoot of the Thugs of Hindostan ; that the society has already vast and extensive ramifications ; that it is now actively engaged in propagating its principles in every capital in Europe, and that it ultimately proposes to itself to strangle all the world ! He sends a synopsis of his plan, and thinks it will

form an excellent foundation for a work of fiction."

"Humph! he had better have sent it to Ainsworth."

"This is from a discharged secretary of legation. He is a Scotchman; has spent some time in the East, and having, as he says, been most disgracefully treated by Palmerston, offers to reveal to you all the secrets of European diplomacy."

"Good! note that down! Anything more?"

"Nothing, sir!"

"Then put all these papers away for the present; I wish to have some conversation with you."

"Certainly, sir!"

Mr. Phillipson having replaced the letters in the portfolio, and taken a seat near the fire, our hero addressed him as follows:—

"You were recommended to me as an honest and talented man, and upon that recommendation I employed you; but still you will admit that it is natural one should wish to know something of a person whom one selects to fill a confidential situation of this sort."

"My name is Phillipson," briefly replied the Secretary.

"Yes—yes—I am aware of that; but—"

"You wish to hear more? Well, listen! I am fifty years of age! I was once a rich man; I was basely and treacherously ruined! I had a wife who was the joy of my existence; she died of a broken heart! I had a son who was the pride of my manhood; he committed suicide after having been transported!"

"Transported!" exclaimed the Illustrious, throwing a most suspicious glance at his interlocutor.

"Transported," repeated Mr. Phillipson, with the most imperturbable coolness.

"Then—but—God bless me! who and what are you?"

"Circumstances of no common import prevent my revealing that to you at present, sir; you shall learn, however, at no distant period."

"But your son?"

I will relate his sad story to you at once, if you have leisure and inclination to listen to it—"

"Proceed!" and our half-bewildered author threw one leg on the other, crossed his arms, and fixed his little piercing brown eyes upon his sepulchral-looking secretary, as if he would search him through.

CHAPTER II.

"Truth is strange, stranger than fiction."

"In two-faced Janus we this moral find,
While we look forward, we should look behind."

THE FATHER'S STORY—A TALE OF LONDON LIFE !
—THE NIGHT-HOUSE—THE FRAIL FAIR ONE—
THE BILL DISCOUNTER AND HIS AGENT—THE
GOUT—THE FORGERY—THE CONVICT SHIP—THE
SUICIDE.

THIRTEEN years ago, my son, then scarcely of age, came up to London, whither I had sent him to study medicine with a view to entering the profession as a physician. At that time my wife was alive, and we resided upon an estate which I possessed in the country. I was supremely happy ! Blessed with the affections of a devoted wife, and a then dutiful son, I saw nothing in the future but one long vista of tranquil felicity. My boy at that time possessed every good quality which



G. Fala

Mr Philipson

could gladden a parent's heart ; but, alas ! I knew not what London was, nor did he either. Scarcely had he set foot in the modern Babylon before his character began to change, and ere six months had elapsed he was steeped to the lips in guilt and infamy !

For a few weeks after his arrival he attended his classes and lectures with great regularity, and spent his evenings sedately at home at his lodgings in Bouverie-street, studying and preparing himself for the exercises of the morrow ; but one night—one fatal night, sir—he suffered himself to be tempted by a fellow student to accompany him to the Saloon ; and from the moment of his entry into that accursed den, may be dated the commencement of his ruin.

Too guileless at first to perceive the vice which lurked under the surface of these immoral entertainments ; and, afterwards, alas ! too weak to tear himself from the meretricious gaiety and glitter which accompanied and surrounded them, he visited this and other places of the like description more and more frequently ; until, at length, almost his whole time, well nigh every hour of the night and day too, were spent in them, and among the acquaintances to which they had introduced to him. He neglected his studies ; his letters to his mother and myself became less and

less frequent ; and it was at this period, as I afterwards heard, that he became intimate with one of those lost women of whom the wisest have said, "*Their feet lead down to death, their steps take hold on hell.*" Oh, bitterly, bitterly, did my poor James prove and experience, to its uttermost extent, the truth of this. But, to proceed ; the girl with whom he had formed this *liaison* involved my thoughtless son in the most enormous expenses ; and, as you will learn by the remainder of my narrative, never left him till he was completely and irretrievably ruined.

Young, handsome, well educated, and vivacious, she possessed every quality to lead the heart of a boy astray. Her face, form, and manners were perfection ! I have seen her—I have conversed with her—and, notwithstanding all the horror and detestation which I felt for her from her base conduct to my son, I could not but confess to myself, that, had I been subjected to the same temptation at the same age, I, too, might have succumbed and fallen as he did.

But I will not detain you longer with these vain moralisings ; suffice it to say that James was completely entangled in her snares ; and for some weeks they led a life of mad, wicked extravagance together—careless of the present—utterly regardless of the future—until one day he

found that he had but a single five-pound note remaining.

The disposal, by degrees, of every article which he possessed to the pawnbroker, was, I scarcely need tell you, the next incident in this fearful drama. At length every available resource of this description was exhausted, and he was again reduced almost to his last shilling! Still money must be had, the means must be found to supply this woman's unceasing demands. But how?—Where?—

And now let me beg, sir, your most careful attention! Every word I am about to speak is, I pledge you my soul, the bare truth; every syllable I shall utter can be verified by the oath of a dozen honourable men, if necessary.

At that time there lived, not a hundred miles from the Royal Exchange, a man very well known to almost every rakish fellow about town—he was a bill discounter!—a person, in short, who was always ready to lend money, at high interest, to young gentlemen of good family or expectations.

Many a night had he met James at the places to which the vulture-like propensities of the one, and the dissipated habits of the other, had mutually led them; and, many a night, on witnessing my poor boy's extravagances, had he muttered to himself with a sardonic smile—"We shall see—

we shall see ; that lad will be grinding five shilling stamps into five pound notes at my paper mill shortly, or I'm much mistaken !”

And he was right, sir, he was a true prophet ; for, after some slight hesitation, and a few faint misgivings at having any dealings with a man of whose character and doings he had heard so many strange reports, my son—ashamed to inform me of his difficulties and involvements—went and called on Mr. Sharper, the bill discounter of whom I am now making mention.

I need not tell you that he was cordially received ; and that every facility and encouragement was afforded to his explaining the object of his visit. At first Mr. Sharper demurred to lending so large a sum (two hundred and fifty pounds) as my son had applied for ; but ultimately agreed to do so, and also promised to send it to him without fail in a day or two.

A week passed after this. James, meantime, had heard nothing ; the bill discounter appeared to have forgotten his promise altogether ; when, on the morning of the eighth day following, a gentleman presented himself at Bouverie-street, on the part of Mr. Sharper, and this is what took place between them—

I can well recollect every word of the conversation, for I made my poor lost boy repeat it to

me not once only, but many, many, many times over.

“Sir,” said this gentleman, “I have brought you the two hundred and fifty pounds, of which you requested the loan a week since from Mr. Sharper.”

“Pray tell Mr. Sharper, sir, that I feel excessively obliged to him,” replied James, who, as you may suppose, was most agreeably surprised.

“Here is the amount in bank notes; be so good as to count them?”

With trembling eagerness the poor lad complied with the suggestion. When he had finished, the gentleman proceeded as follows —

“My friend, Mr. Sharper, consents to let you have this sum upon condition that you repay it in three months, with the usual interest.”

“What interest?”

“Fifteen per cent.”

“So be it. I’ll give you my note of hand for the amount immediately.” And seating himself at his escritoire he wrote a promissory note, thus :—

“London, May 12, 18—.

“Three months after date I promise to pay to Mr. Sharper, or order, the sum of two hundred and eighty-seven pounds ten shillings, for value received.”

This was the decisive moment—this was the

instant on which his honour, his very life depended. Mark what followed. He was about to sign his name, when the gentleman stopped him.

"What are you going to do?" said he.

"To sign my name at the bottom of this promissory note—is not that the usual course?"

"Most certainly it is; but *your* name is so little known that the note would be scarcely negotiable; in fact, my friend Sharper wouldn't take it."

"What is it necessary for me to do then?"

"Well, you must put some other signature to it, better known than your own," responded the gentleman with a smile.

"Sir!" exclaimed James, starting from his seat, with indignation.

"Nay, nay," interrupted Mr. Sharper's friend, "you mistake my meaning altogether; I was merely about proposing to lend you *my* name. I suppose there is no harm in that?"

"Lend me your name!"

"Yes, your name is perfectly satisfactory to Sharper, as far as the security of the business is concerned; but, as I said before, he can't afford to lay out his money except upon a negotiable instrument; now, my name will pass current at any banker's in London, and as my old friend is satisfied with your security, and as I have been

under no slight obligations to him, why, I lend you, or rather him, my signature, and thus enable him to realise thirty-seven pounds ten on a transaction which he otherwise could not entertain."

"Ah! yes; I see," said James; "but why am I to sign your name? Why not do it yourself?"

"Because, unfortunately, I'm not able," rejoined the gentleman.

"Not able?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Well, for a very good reason, because an infernal attack of my old enemy the *gout* won't permit me. Here, look here; you are a medical man, I believe. What d'ye think of that?" said the gentleman, carefully ungloving and presenting to my son's view a terribly inflamed right hand, the knuckles of which were one mass of chalk stones.

Any momentary suspicion which my son might have conceived was completely done away with. He fell into the snare, inquired the gentleman's name, signed it, and therein signed his death warrant.

I need scarcely tell you that this man, whose name was Judas, was the tool, the jackall, of Sharper; and that they thus worked their atrocious villanies in admirable concert.

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Well, sir, the three months passed rapidly away, and my unhappy son at the end of that time found himself more deeply involved in debt than ever.

On the day the promissory note was due, Mr. Judas again called at Bouverie-street. He was ushered up-stairs to my boy's apartments, and entered with the note in his hand.

"Sir," said James, "I am sorry to be obliged to put off for a week or so the payment due to-day; but I have now determined to write to my father, and, confessing the difficulties in which my folly has plunged me, ask his assistance to extricate me from them. Be assured that in the course of ten days, at furthest, the two hundred and eighty-seven pounds ten shall be paid."

"The two hundred and eighty-seven pounds ten?" said Judas.

"Yes. Is not that the amount which I owe you?"

"Owe me! owe me! you don't owe me anything."

"What mean you?" inquired my son.

"I never lent you anything," answered the other.

"But that note of hand!" exclaimed the unfortunate lad.

"Ah! this note of hand," replied Mr. Judas;

"this note of hand is signed with my name, and, for my credit's sake, I have taken it up ; I have paid it ; but—it is a *forgery* !"

"A forgery?"

"Yes ; a forgery !"

"But, merciful God, sir, do you not remember?"

"I remember nothing."

"What !"

"I know nothing, but that *this* is a forgery, for which you will have to answer at the Old Bailey."

My poor lost boy saw at a glance the fearful situation in which he was placed ; he knew himself to be in this fiend's power. Terror-stricken at the consequences, he sank, fainting, on the sofa.

"Harkye, young gentleman," said Mr. Judas, who had all through preserved the utmost coolness, "the mention of the Old Bailey seems to have produced a terrible effect on you ; but listen—matters need not be pushed as far as that—there is a mode by which this business may be hushed up."

"What mode?" asked my son, utterly prostrate, and overwhelmed with terror and despair.

"Your father is tolerably rich?"

"He is, he is—very, very rich."

"So much the better. You shall write to him—you shall tell him of the danger in which you stand; and if he consents to pay a sum of two thousand pounds, I, on my part, will engage that the whole affair shall be buried in oblivion."

"Two thousand pounds!"

"Accept or reject my offer, as you choose."

"I—I will write—I will write!"

He did write, sir! Need I describe to you what I felt on receiving his letter? I consulted no one—I saw the precipice on which he stood—I felt that he was in the power of a demon—I paid the money!

For one year I heard no more of Mr. Judas! Yet, as he had not given up the fatal note, I had fearful misgivings that all was not yet over.

Those misgivings were too soon realised. He returned to the charge, and another like sum was again paid to purchase his silence!

I was rich, sir; but this incarnate demon thus, by degrees, drained from me every penny I possessed in the world; and, when he found that his thirst for gold was no longer satisfied—thinking, perhaps, that my refusal to bribe him further arose from disinclination, and not from disability—he laid his charge before a magistrate, and my son was tried, and, on the evidence of that fiend in human form, was transported for life!

The wretched boy, on his passage out to the penal settlements, destroyed himself in a fit of delirium; his mother died of a broken heart; and
—I—I LIVE FOR VENGEANCE!



CHAPTER III.

“Scribimus indocti, doctique.”

“The youth who hopes th’ Olympic prize to gain,
All arts must try and every toil sustain.”

THE ILLUSTRIOUS’S NEXT NEW TALE—THE OPINION
—THE IDEAL AND THE NATURAL—THE AP-
POINTMENT.

MR. PHILLIPSON had sunk back on his chair, and overwhelmed with the terrible reminiscences which his recital had conjured up.

The illustrious Boz, as he sat contemplating his amanuensis with marked attention, scarcely knew what to think of the man whom chance had thus thrown in his way, and he seriously reflected as to what degree of confidence it would be advisable to place in so strange and mysterious a person.

At length, making up his mind to see and hear more before he decided, he addressed his Secretary as follows :—

"Mr. Phillipson," said he, "you have recounted your son's history to me, but I have been able to gather from it little or nothing with regard to your own past life!"

"My life!" murmured the Secretary, with a shudder.

And then, by a powerful effort, shaking off the pre-occupation in which he had until that moment been absorbed, and regarding our hero with a look of firmness, bordering well nigh on audacity—

"My life," he continued, "I have already informed you, is a mystery; and, for some time at least, a mystery it must remain!"

"Then, in short—you—you—"

"In short," interrupted the amanuensis, with some slight symptoms of impatience, "all I engaged to do, was to render myself especially useful to you. I am ready to perform my promise whenever you please."

"And in what manner do you propose to render yourself useful to me?"

"You have written many tales," replied the Secretary; "but you must pardon me if I give it as my opinion, that your characters—powerfully and graphically drawn as the major part of them are—are still not drawn from *nature*. They have more of *romance* than *reality* about them. In a word, they are the result, not of the study of living

types, but rather of a rich invention, and prurient imagination."

"Well, really, sir—upon my word—" began our hero, very much inclined to be offended, but still anxious to know whither all this was to lead.

"Now," continued Mr. Phillipson, coolly nipping our author's reply short in the bud, "your novel is finished, you are about to commence another work. Whatever be the nature of its plot, you will require variety of *character*, and if you choose to put yourself under my guidance I can show you many curious specimens of our species; you are a clever workman, I can enable you to strike a new, and hitherto unexplored, vein of ore; in short, to take a stride from *the Ideal* to the NATURAL! What say you?"

"When shall we commence?"

"Whenever you please."

"To-day?"

"To-night!"

"So be it. At what hour?"

"I will be with you at nine precisely!"



CHAPTER IV.

“ Congenial passions souls together bind,
And ev’ry calling mingles with its kind.”

“ When down below, the gath’ring numbers cram,
Contending crowders shout the frequent damn,
And all is bustle, squeeze, row, jabbering, and jam.”

PILL GARLICK.

THE THIEVES’ DEN—THE DISGUISES—THE ENTRY
—THE BULL’S-EYE—THE BLUE HORSEMAN —
THE CHEQUERS—THE BOND-STREET BOOKSEL-
LER—LORD M———SIR J—— G———THE
RINGMAN — ELIZA — THE PITFALL.

As the richly-chased ormolu time-piece of the library struck the first stroke of nine, Mr. Phillipson, punctual to his appointment, entered the apartment, and found the Illustrious waiting to receive him.

Placing upon the table a large bundle, which he had brought with him, the Secretary proceeded to unpack it, and expose its contents.

“ What are these things for?” inquired our hero.

"Sir," replied Phillipson, as he took out of the parcel a couple of smock frocks, two countrymen's hats, and two pairs of hob-nailed iron-tipped ankle-jacks, "in order to effect your introduction to the divers scenes which I have promised to set before you, we shall not unfrequently have to change both our costumes and our complexions! To-night, for instance, I am about to conduct you to a place where your varnished patent-leather boots, and lemon-coloured kid gloves, would be as much out of place as Prince Albert at a meeting of Chartists, Thomas Slingsby Duncombe at a Quaker's revival, or the Duke of Wellington at a Methodist love feast. So we must don these habiliments for a time, if you please."

"Very well," replied our hero, after a moment's silence; "I have no objection, provided you fulfil the promises you have made."

"I will do so, never fear," answered the mysterious Secretary; "I have engaged to show you guilt and vice in all their natural deformity and nakedness, and I will keep my engagement; only remember," continued he, with a slight ironical inflection of tone, "remember, that if the specimens should fall short of your expectation, you must not lay the fault at my door, but rather blame Dame Nature for not having abased, or

elevated, her abortions to your imaginative standard."

Our hero and his amanuensis having put on their disguises, and wrapped themselves in their cloaks, sallied forth from Devonshire-terrace, and, taking a cab from the stand in Great Portland-street, drove off in the direction indicated by Phillipson.

After the lapse of about half an hour, the Secretary pulled the check-string, the vehicle stopped, and on descending, they found themselves at the top of a dark narrow lane, which our hero, notwithstanding his intimate knowledge of the low neighbourhoods and haunts of London, could not recollect that he had ever seen or visited before.

Taking the number of the cab, and leaving their cloaks in the care of the driver, Mr. Phillipson directed him to wait their return at the entrance of the next street; and then, with a whispered caution to his companion to keep silence till they reached their place of destination, led the way rapidly onward.

After proceeding about five-and-thirty yards down the lane, the Secretary suddenly linked his arm within that of our hero, and, glancing back for a moment, as if to be certain that they were unwatched and unobserved, turned quickly be-

neath a covered archway. It was pitch-dark forward ; not a single glimmer could be seen which might serve to guide their steps, or indicate their whereabouts, but still Mr. Phillipson held on his course with a confidence and decision which argued the most perfect knowledge of every foot of the ground along which they were advancing.

And well it was for Boz that this mysterious Secretary possessed this knowledge ; for there was that within a single pace, on either side of them, which would have precipitated one less acquainted with the route into certain destruction !

The Illustrious's heart beat hard and fast, so instantaneous had been the plunge into utter darkness. He was on the point of questioning or remonstrating with his guide, but recollecting the injunction to silence, he kept his lips closed.

"Fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen," muttered the Secretary to himself, keeping time with each successive step, and, as he pronounced the last-named number, riveting our great romancer to the spot, by the linked arm, with a grasp of iron !

"Hollo ! Hollo !"

"Hush !—Silence !—To the right !" responded Phillipson, as he wheeled our hero round in that direction, and continued his course through the darkness as before.

Boz's heart beat harder and faster, and thumped

against his side more furiously than ever ; but still he bore in mind the reiterated injunction of his singular companion, and uttered not a word.

Another muttered counting of " Nine, ten, eleven," by the Secretary—another stern pull up, and another turn (this time to the left), with a hurried whisper of " Take care, we descend four steps here, keep close for your life," brought them, after gaining the bottom of the stairs, to a door which—at a peculiar knock by Phillipson on its iron-plated surface, and the utterance, with a strong guttural intonation, of the monosyllable *Grah*—fell noiselessly back on its apparently well-oiled hinges, and gave them entrance to a short passage very dimly lighted by the rays of a candle, which was visible through a small square aperture at the opposite end of it.

This aperture was the wicket of another inner door. Scarcely had they entered this passage—hardly had our hero had time to give a startled glance at a pair of piercing eyes, which were peering forth on him from behind the candle at the aperture, than he felt an intense and overwhelming sensation—a sensation such as those only can conceive, who, after having been immured for months in a dungeon to which no ray of light can penetrate, are suddenly let forth into the broad glare of sunshine—

It was horrible, it was excruciating, it was appalling—

In a word, it was—A BULL'S-EYE!!

Yes, gentle reader, a bull's-eye lantern, which the watcher at the wicket, in order to obtain a better view, had focalised, policeman fashion, on our hero's countenance on discovering that he was a stranger.

The Illustrious was blinded out of one of his senses, and frightened out of all the rest. His heart became so awfully agitated that it absolutely left off beating altogether, and either leaped up into his mouth or sank within him; we really don't exactly know which. He gasped, he breathed short, he clung to the mysterious Secretary, as fast as Bunn clings to management, or Maddox to a good bargain; in short, he well nigh fainted away!

Now some people may say, perhaps, that such extreme terror was unmanly. We don't think so. The recollection of the strange paths he had traversed, of the desperate and lawless beings with whom he was about to come in contact, of the profound darkness from which he had barely emerged—each and all no slight provocations to alarm; and then the bull's-eye—the fiendish bull's-eye, glaring like some star of the damned through the thick blackness, and

scorching up his sense of sight to a cinder. We really don't think his being frightened showed any unmanliness at all ; and we are only surprised that he didn't faint away completely. We are sure that we should ! Besides, our hero hadn't come in contact with bull's-eyes for many and many a long year ; never, in fact, since he was a little boy ; and then, moreover, they were a very different sort of thing—being always made of barley sugar.

But if we keep lagging on our way in this manner with gossiping descriptions and episodic explanations, we shall never get either our author, or our readers, or ourselves, into the house and out again, and through a great many other strange adventures which we have to relate !

So to proceed at once—the Illustrious having in some measure recovered his equanimity, and Phillipson having advanced and exchanged a few whispered words with the man at the wicket (by whom, by-the-bye, he was immediately recognised and addressed with respect), the inner entrance was opened, and both were admitted to another passage, about half way down, which the Secretary, after pausing and listening for a moment, opened a very narrow door on his left hand, and, beckoning to his companion to follow closely, walked into the room that contained the “types” which

the illustrious Quill had encountered so much danger and discomfort to visit.

The apartment which they had just entered was about twenty-five feet by twelve, and very dimly lighted. A condensed reek of tobacco smoke circled in sluggish eddies along the low ceiling, and almost completely concealed the further end of it from view.

Oblong deal tables and benches to match, both firmly clamped to the floor and the side walls, were ranged transversely from top to bottom of the place, and in the extreme distance a fire-place might be indistinctly seen, the tables near which were crowded with persons of both sexes, gossiping, drinking, and smoking.

Our hero coughed and recoiled a little as he inhaled the almost stifling fumes of the tobacco, and cast his eye over the motley scene; but the vigorous arm of his amanuensis drew him forward, and an instant afterwards he found himself seated beside his companion on a vacant bench near the middle of the room, which was not only, as we have just said, densely crowded near the fire, but tolerably well filled throughout.

Hammering violently on the table with his hand, the Secretary called for something to drink, which having been duly furnished, he addressed his employer, in low tones, as follows:—



"I have promised to set before your view the dark and fearful realities which exist in London. Here behold the first picture. It certainly is not the most hideous which I could have chosen, but it is not bad in its way, as I think you will acknowledge when I shall have given you a sketch of the lives of some of those into whose society I have introduced you."

Boz cast a furtive glance around, and the persons who were passing and repassing near him were, most assuredly, not of a description to calm any fear he might feel. He mentioned his apprehensions to his Secretary.

"Fear nothing," replied that gentleman; "these fellows all know me, and dare not, for their lives, lift a finger against any one who comes hither under my safeguard."

"Indeed!—but why not?"

"Ah! because—"

"Who are you, sir?"

"I will tell you that at some future period."

"Why not now?"

"Because, if I did, you might not be disposed to listen to me."

"Humph! Pray, what motive have you for rendering me these services?"

"The pleasure which I feel in being useful to you."

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"No *other* motive?"

"Well, yes; but that forms a part of the secret which I have promised ultimately to reveal to you."

"Oh! ah!—well, just as you please."

The fact is, that the illustrious Quill found himself in a sort of false position. He had advanced to a certain extent without knowing whether he was to be led, and now he could not well retreat; so resolving to put as good a face upon the matter as he could, he listened attentively while Mr. Phillipson proceeded as follows:—

"The man whom you see at yon third table on the left from the fire-place," said the Secretary, "is called the 'Blue Horseman;' he was originally a silk weaver, and he, no doubt, obtained this soubriquet from having formerly been a very celebrated pigeon-fancier. His loft in Spitalfields contained the finest strain in all London of the magnificent bird from whence he has got his name. 'They vasn't,' as he would phrase it, and he delighted to recount it to you, 'they vasn't blue dragguns, but blue orsmun—real vuns, vith beaks nigher a nail than two hitches from tip to corner, and as straight as a voof-line, and vattles as 'ud make any half-crown in the world look like a sixpenny bit by the side on 'em; they vos orsmun!' And truly so they were," continued

the singular Secretary, speaking as if from his own knowledge, and with all the fervour of a connoisseur; "they were splendid birds!"

"But," interposed our hero, "I really can't exactly see what these birds have to do with—"

"With the business that brought us here!" interposed his amanuensis. "Well, I'll tell you"—and a half contemptuous smile of superiority flitted across his countenance—"I'll tell you. This man, as I said, was originally a weaver, and a pigeon-fancier."

"Exactly so!"

"His speech, every sentence he utters, no matter what the subject, is interlarded with the technical terms and cant words which are used in those two callings!"

"Ah, yes; still I don't see much *character* to be got out of that, unless, indeed, he were some very remarkable person."

"He is a very remarkable person."

"Indeed!"

"Yes! That man planned and superintended the abstraction of the five thousand pound pocket-book from that out-door Bank of England clerk the other day."

"Bless my heart and soul!"

"He was, moreover, the leader of the party who nearly succeeded in easing the Lombard-

street postman of letters containing enclosures to the amount of at least a quarter of a million !”

“ Mercy upon me, you don’t say so !” ejaculated our hero.

“ In fact, he is the captain—the head of that powerful but select association called ‘ The Chequers ! ’ ”

“ The Chequers ! what are they ?”

“ Clever and shrewd gentlemen and ladies who watch careless and foolish gentlemen and ladies into and out of banking houses, sometimes even ‘ easing ’ them of the proceeds of their cheques at the very counter. Hence arises their name.”

“ Ah ! yes ; I understand !”

“ The Blue Horseman is also extensively connected with the higher class of cracksmen ; he works his own melting-pot, and sticks at nothing where a good ‘ *put up* ’ presents itself. For example, in the A — street burglary, some years ago, when the Hon. Mr. — was murdered, his was known to have been the hand that struck the fatal blow !”

“ But, good God !” said Boz, half aghast, half delighted to find himself in such close proximity to a real assassin ; “ why was he not brought to justice ?”

“ He *was* ! He was tried at the Old Bailey !”

“ Well ?”

“ And on the oaths of two *highly respectable* witnesses, who swore an *alibi* in his favour, he was acquitted !”

“ And yet you say that he was guilty ?”

“ I do !”

“ Then the two witnesses must have been——”

“ As I said—highly respectable men—at least, so ‘*everybody*’ considered. One of them, for instance, was a tradesman named B——, who ostensibly kept a dashing bookseller and stationer’s shop in Bond-street, not a thousand yards from the Clarendon, and whose window was noted for the variety of beautifully-bound bibles and prayer-books which it always contained; but ‘*everybody*’ did not know that the stock-in-trade behind the little green curtain was of a very different description, and that B—— had constantly on sale, for customers whom he knew, or who were *properly* introduced, the most superb collection of Paphian prints and paintings in all London ! Lord M——, and Sir J—— G——, who were both of them at that time Cabinet Ministers, *they* indeed knew it, and spent a good deal of money there ; but as I have just said, ‘*everybody*’ did not ! The Recorder, for example, who tried ‘The Horseman.’ I don’t believe that he was cognizant of the nature of the ‘highly respectable Bond-street tradesman’s business, or of his real character !”

“ But—” began our author.

“ And, moreover,” continued the Secretary, unheeding the interruption, “ there was one remarkable thing connected with the affair which *nobody* knew: *This same B——, had himself been tried for a forgery at that same Old Bailey bar, five-and-twenty years before, and had been acquitted of the charge, through evidence given in his favour by the then Spitalfields’ weaver—the present ‘Blue Horseman’; the very man whom he thus in turn saved from the gallows, and who is now smoking and drinking at that table!*”

“ Well!” upon my word, said the Illustrious, drawing a deep breath, “ ‘Truth is indeed more strange than fiction.’ ”

“ To be sure it is, and twenty times as marvellous; for hundreds of men about town will recognise these sketches. A judicious use of your slang dictionary, and a half-crown copy of the ‘Complete Pigeon Fancier,’ will enable you to work the ‘Blue Horseman’ out; and as to B——, when I add that he was originally an attorney by profession—weighing over twenty stone—and was a natural son of the celebrated Charles James Fox (whom, by-the-bye, he closely resembled in features), I think I have given you a couple of rough draughts from NATURE, which, when filled in with your powerful graver, will be

a dozen of the *Dombey* and *Oliver Twist* worth IDEALS!"

"You have, indeed; but you spoke of another witness who assisted in proving the *alibi*; who and what was he?"

"A 'respectable' tradesman likewise. His name was B——r, and at that time he kept a Tavern in Upper Marylebone-street; just in the bend, a few doors from Cleveland-street. He was a great 'bail'-man, and would 'justify' to any amount for anybody—if they 'tipped,' and if the Court would 'take' him. He was also mixed up with the 'play' world;—with the late Al——ge, and L——l, and Tommy S——n, the attorney, and F—— P——, the late L——n, and B——, and all that set; but, somehow or other, he was not so lucky as B——, and our friend the 'Blue Horseman' there—for *he was transported* a few years ago!"

At this moment the door was opened, and several persons, both male and female, entered the room and installed themselves, without ceremony, at the different vacant tables. Boz, whose misgivings with regard to his singular Secretary had been for the instant forgotten in the interest which he had taken in the late recital, was now perfectly petrified at seeing these new comers salute his companion as they passed with an air

of the greatest deference; but though this latter named gentleman distinctly observed the horror and suspicion which was depicted on our great romancer's countenance, he calmly returned their respective acknowledgments, and, turning to his astounded patron, resumed the conversation as follows:—

“The man,” said he, “whom you saw enter a minute ago, in company with that pretty young girl who is now seating herself by his side, is, *by those who really know him*, called ‘THE RINGMAN.’ He owes this designation to the nature of the trade which he drives, viz., the promoting and getting up prize fights with a view to drawing of their cash those who are such fools as to attend at them!”

“Ah! there is nothing very remarkable or worth notice, I should think, in him. Specimens of that genus are to be found in every sporting house in London.”

“Not at all. You must not suppose that I direct your attention to him as one who is merely engaged in the every-day common-place business of taking bets and making ‘crosses.’ No; that man is at the head of a peculiar but very select fraternity of ‘Travellers;’ *he is always ready to push on matches—advance a part of the battle-money—nay, the whole, if necessary, when he can*

get two top-sawyers pitted against each other—for the chance of the harvest in the shape of purses, watches, and pocket-books, which are to be gleaned from the crowd who have assembled to witness the fight!"

"You astonish me! but does he never get caught at his tricks?"

"Caught! who is to catch him? He never 'operates' himself."

"Indeed!"

"Certainly not; and he would break your head if he were to hear you hint the remotest suspicion of such a thing. Why, he is hand and glove with the first sporting men in the kingdom!"

"God bless me; then how is it managed?"

"Managed? by his well-paid subordinates! He never attempts to pick a pocket—indeed, I'll do him the justice to say that I don't think he could if he were to try, for you *well know* that that is an art which requires a proper apprenticeship, and no little manual dexterity."

"I know!" said Boz, in a highly offended tone.

"Certainly you do," rejoined Mr. Phillipson, "or how the deuce did you manage to give that sketch of Fagan?"

"Oh! yes, yes, true," muttered our hero, rather taken aback, and scarcely knowing whether his strange secretary was presuming to banter and

run a joke on him or not, but compelled to accept the obvious explanation.

"Well," resumed the Amanuensis, "as I said just now, 'the Ringman' never attempts to pick a pocket; on the contrary, you will see him at one moment at the inner edge of the inner ring, in the privileged corner, by D—'s side; at the next, mixing with all the nobs in every direction, sporting a 'fiver' or a 'tenner,' and proposing to post the coal, in order to see how a well-dressed stranger happens to be breeched, and then, if he finds all right, giving the office to his well-trained myrmidons, who mark their victim with a certainty, an acuteness, an audacity that nothing can escape; for he pays them by a good per centage in gold upon the '*heavy swag*,' and allows them all the '*broken money*'—i. e., less sums than a sovereign, as a perquisite."

"But suppose *they* get caught?"

"That is *their* hazard! They never 'peach, and he furnishes the money to provide them with the best legal assistance to 'shy the darbies' if practicable!"

"Wonderful! Pray proceed!" said the Illustrious, once more so thoroughly interested in his Secretary's revealments as to forget, for the moment, all about his own misgivings and suspicions.

"You like these '*realities*,' then?"

"Oh, yes, amazingly."

"Well, that handsome girl, whom you see sitting by the 'Ringman's' side," continued Mr. Phillipson, "is called Eliza. Thrown, when very young, by circumstances which I will relate to you at some future period, into this vortex of depravity, she has become one of the most talented '*travellers*' in London, and has been frequently employed, with the greatest success, in a singular association, which will, if I mistake not, when I take you to see its workings, excite your surprise more than any other of the strange scenes to which I propose to have the honour of introducing you. She possesses an extraordinary degree of astuteness, is a perfect mistress of every department of her profession, and, for the furtherance of the schemes of the association I have just mentioned, has successively acted the parts of housemaid in Lord C——'s establishment, where she nibbled five hundred and fifty odd pounds; dancer at the G—— Saloon, where she concocted the '*plant*' which was so cleverly executed for carrying off old F——'s plate; mistress to Captain ——, of the Coldstreams, from whom she got three hundred guineas, and a carriage worth two hundred more; lady's maid to Madame V——, from whom, though, she didn't get any-

thing—not even her wages ; and proprietress of a stall in the Pantheon, which she gave up about three months since, for the purpose of devoting her time and talents, at his earnest entreaty, to the gentleman who now sits beside her !

“ She has a brother, too,” proceeded Mr. Philipson, “ that pale, sickly-looking young fellow, who is lounging on the bench of the next table. He is a desperate drunken dog, and spends the greater part of his time in rooms like this, sotting away the allowance which his sister makes him. He is now two-and-thirty years of age, and, while his father lived, was an honest and laborious mechanic ; but he could not bear up against poverty and its attendant evils, so now he is a robber. When we visit the Bethlehem Asylum together I will show you the man who was the cause of the ruin and misery of this unfortunate family ; meantime, if you will turn your eye to the left, you will there see—”

Who or what our hero would have seen, must, we regret to say, be, at all events for the present, lost to the reader, for, at that moment, a burst of uproarious laughter from somebody outside the room caused his mysterious Secretary to break off suddenly in his narration. He started up, apparently in no little trepidation, and—whispering to his companion that a person was about to enter

whom he had most important reasons for wishing to avoid—led the way from the apartment (closely followed by his startled companion) through another door near the fire-place, and then, passing through a kind of bar-parlour, and down a long, dusky, winding passage, came out at its extremity, upon the left hand of the man who had charge of the little wicket and the big “bull’s-eye!”

They were duly let out, and, after treading the dark labyrinths, with the same mysterious countings and peculiar precautions on Mr. Phillipson’s part as before, the illustrious Quill found himself, to his no small satisfaction, safe and sound at the corner of the street from whence he had an hour before taken his departure.

Reassured as to his personal safety, Boz, as they were walking towards the cab, bethought himself that he would inquire of his Secretary the reason of the mysterious countings and sudden pullings-up to which he had been subjected.

“Did you not notice, as we walked along those passages, that the flooring was slightly ribbed across with strips of wood, at intervals about twenty inches apart?” asked Mr. Phillipson, in reply.

“Eh, well; now you mention it, I do recollect something of the sort. Yes, I stumbled against them once or twice.”

"And you would have stumbled into your tomb, if I hadn't been by your side."

"What?"

"They are placed there in order that all who are free to visit that place, and are acquainted with the secret of its entrances, may be able to *measure their distance accurately!*"

"And all others?"

"Are doomed to death, whatever be their caution; for, with the eighteenth step in the first passage, and the twelfth in the second, you tread on *air*, and plunge into a '*well*'-made grave, where the bones of many a poor wretch lie rotting. There's another '*REALITY*' for you."

"Mercy upon me!" exclaimed the horror-struck and bewildered Boz, as he almost fell back out of the cab into which Mr. Phillipson was assisting him.

"Devonshire-terrace, Regent's-park," said the mysterious Secretary to the driver, as he closed the door upon our renowned romancer, and throwing his cloak over his shoulders, calmly strolled onwards towards his lodgings in —— street.

CHAPTER V.

“ And here let those who boast in mortal things,
Learn how their greatest monuments of fame,
And strength, and art, are easily outdone
By reprobate spirits.”

MILTON.

BOZ AND MR. MAZZINI—THE WALK HOME—THE
REVERIE—THE RENCONTRE—THE CONVERSA-
TION—THE CONSPIRACY—PIO NONO !

THE nocturnal rambles of our hero and his Secretary were continued during several successive evenings, and each new excursion brought under our author's view fresh and valuable matter for present reflection and future development.

On the night on which our present chapter opens, they had visited another of those terrible scenes of vice and depravity, which tend more than aught else to the engendering and nourishment of crime among us. The clock of St. Martin's church struck four as they left the place; day was already beginning to break, the streets

were completely deserted, the morning breeze blew cold and bleak, and our author thought that instead of riding home in a cab, a sharp walk through the fresh air would refresh and invigorate him.

Bidding his Secretary good night at the corner of the Haymarket, he continued his solitary route towards his residence, pondering deeply on the one subject ever uppermost in his thoughts—his next new tale.

The many strange anecdotes and effective sketches of character which his peregrinations with Mr. Phillipson had enabled him to transfer to his note-book, were, it is true, of the greatest value; but he still had to create the frame-work on which these incidents and types were to be strung and gibbeted. All his materials were ready, but the ground plot of the building had still to be determined on. In a word, he wanted an "Idea" of some interesting or singular story wherewith to form the pivot round which his characters might revolve and develop themselves.

But ideas of this sort are rather difficult to dig up from one's noddle. Sometimes the *earth* in which they are so mysteriously embedded is scarcely workable; it is too dry or too wet, too rich or too poor; and sometimes the mine has been completely worked out, and we uncon-

sciously reclothe and attempt to revivify but the erratic ghosts of former ones.

Not that we think this is Boz's case, for his last work fairly proves the contrary. Still, as we said, ideas of this sort are difficult to dig up, and more particularly difficult when the public, as in our author's instance, expect something so very peculiar and original.

It was four o'clock in the morning ; it was excessively cold ; the Illustrious quickened his pace almost to a run. The "idea" still flew from him ; one would have thought that he was racing after it.

Even so races Lawrence Levy after Ch——s M——s in quest of money—even so races L—— to Italy in quest of "method."

When a little past the church in Langham-place, our hero ran full butt against an individual who was rapidly turning the corner of Duchess-street.

"I really beg your pardon, sir," said Boz, feeling that he was the party to blame, if blame there were in the rencontre ; "I really beg your pardon—I—" but catching a glimpse at this moment of the stranger's face, which was closely muffled up in the folds of his brown roquelaire, he suddenly stopped and exclaimed, "why—eh—yes—as I live, it is my very good friend Mazzini !"

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"What! the Illustrious Quill!" exclaimed the Signor of Post-office notoriety (for he it was), grasping the hand which our author had extended to him most cordially.

"Yes, indeed," replied Boz; "but what on earth brings you out thus early?"

"Business—business, my dear fellow; I start by the six o'clock train this morning for Southampton and the Continent."

"Aha! Political business I presume, then?"

"Yes, yes. But allow me in turn to inquire what you are doing abroad at this hour? Searching for adventures, eh? Hunting up new characters for your next work?"

"Exactly so."

"Really?"

"Nothing else, upon my honour."

"Good. And, pray, what is to be the subject of it?"

"I'faith, there you puzzle me. I scarcely know myself."

"Something, as usual, very peculiar and unique, I suppose?"

"Yes, if I can hit upon it. But, tell me, what about this European movement—will it succeed?"

"It will."

"And is the tree likely to bear wholesome fruit?"

“ If I did not believe so, I think you have seen enough of me to feel confident that I should never assist at, or make myself a party to, the planting of it.”

“ True—true, my friend ; but you fine spirits of a fine climate are so apt to look on the sunny side of things. The bright sky of your beautiful Italy seems, somehow or other, to have the faculty of imbuing your ideas so thoroughly with its radiant influences that, like your countrymen, you take no account of the Vesuvius which casts its dark shadow over your very pillow.”

“ Ah !” said Mazzini, passing his arm through that of our author, and turning with him down Portland-place, “ you know little of me if such be your opinion. A word in your ear. Think you that tens—nay, hundreds—of thousands of men would place in my keeping their lives and fortunes, and the part guidance of the noblest brotherhood of human beings the world ever saw, if I were the mere dreamer you suppose me ? No, no ! Though for five-and-twenty years I have hoped against hope, certain that our holy cause must in the end prevail, believe me I have neither been insensible to the clouds and dangers that have darkened and beset our path, nor unmindful of providing the means for dispersing and avoiding them.”

"And is it really a fact, then, that these political associations to which I presume you allude exist to any considerable extent?"

"Associations? No; or, if they do, I know nought of them. But AN association—yes."

"And its ultimate object?"

"The emancipation of an enslaved world."

"An enslaved *world*?"

"Yes; Italy, France, Germany, are but '*the beginning of the end*!'"

"And do you for a moment dream that you possess means adequate to the accomplishment of so gigantic an enterprise?"

"Means!" echoed the enthusiastic Italian; "our sworn brothers swarm in every city from the Atlantic to the Bosphorus. MEANS! See what we *have* done—see what we *are* doing—and judge from that of what we *can* do! Yes, we have gained the resting-point the old Syracusan vainly longed for! *Europe is the fulcrum, a free press the lever, with which we will raise the universe to liberty!* We are the true Archimedean after all."

"'Tis a vast conception!"

"And will crown its projectors with honours more unfading, and blessings more universal, than ever yet were earned by mortal man!"

Our author was lost in astonishment! "May

I ask you," said he, at length, "what is the nature of the organisation of this association?"

"I fear I have not time to explain that to you this morning," replied Mazzini, looking at his watch. "No, 'tis near five; but when I return from Paris in a few days you shall know all."

"And who is the head—the leader in this stupendous project?" asked our author, as they were shaking hands to part.

"The man who with consummate tact, some months since, planted our entering wedge, and struck that first blow on it, which has been echoed from end to end of the European continent—*God's own Vicegerent upon earth*—Pio Nono!

A smile of joy irradiated our author's countenance, as he parted from the Italian.

What meant that smile? Our readers shall know presently.



CHAPTER VI.

"The tale I unfold to-day
No fiction is, but from records pure
Of truth has been obtained."

RINALDO, THE VISIONARY.

**GUILT AND INNOCENCE—BETHLEHEM HOSPITAL—
THE LUNATIC—THE HISTORY OF AN HONEST
FAMILY.**

Our hero one day accompanied Mr. Phillipson to the Bethlehem Hospital, and after the latter had pointed out several of the most remarkable among those unhappy beings who tenant its gloomy walls, he addressed him as follows :—

"The other evening, when I directed your attention to the young girl called Eliza, I told you that when we visited this place together, I would show you the man through whose instrumentality she and her brother had been driven to their present desperate course of life. There he stands!"

On looking in the direction which his Secretary

indicated, Boz observed a thin squalid figure, every feature of whose countenance bespoke the most hopeless and confirmed idiocy and imbecility!

“Has *this* man been a criminal?”

“He has : listen to the fact I am about to relate to you.”

Between ten and eleven o'clock, on a wet dreary night, at the latter end of November, 184—, a working-jeweller, named Robert Laing, was trudging joyously home to his lodgings in Rosamond-street, Clerkenwell. He was one of the cleverest hands in the trade, and, by dint of hard work and unvarying good conduct, had placed himself in comparatively comfortable circumstances. He had a wife and children, whom he dearly loved, and more than sufficient employment to enable him to provide them with all the necessities, and many of the luxuries, incidental to the state of life in which his lot was cast. His quiet habits, and mild, unassuming manners, had gained him the esteem of all his neighbours; and the aid he was ever ready, to the extent of his means, to bestow on the more necessitous of them, rendered him most deservedly a general favourite.

Robert Laing, as we have said, was hastening

home rapidly. He was out much later than usual, in consequence of having had an appointment at nine o'clock that evening to receive a small sum of money, the produce of his labour, of a jeweller at Kensington, and was about to turn the corner of the street in which he lived, when a man suddenly seized him by the collar, and menacingly demanded his money or his life.

Vigorous and active, he, after a short struggle, completely turned the tables on the villain who had thus attacked him, and, hurling him to the ground, was just about to call for the assistance of the police, when, for the first time catching sight of his assailant's features, he started back in horror and amazement—

“ Charles !” exclaimed he—

“ Robert !” murmured the robber, as a dark smile of joy flitted across his pale and haggard countenance.

“ Unhappy man—after the unceasing regret that I have felt at our separation—is it thus that we meet again? In the name of Heaven, what has brought you to this pass?”

“ Hunger,” gloomily replied Charles.

“ Hunger! And why not apply to me? Oh, Charles—Charles—you must be terribly changed.”

“ I—I—I was ignorant of your address.”

“ Ah! true, true, it is now fifteen years since

we parted, and you never answered even one of the many letters I wrote to you! Still—no matter—come with me. I am not rich, but you shall share what Providence has bestowed upon me.” And he led the way to his lodgings.

A fiendish smile again illuminated the pale features of his companion! “He had recovered the prey that he had deemed lost to him for ever.” He would at length have it in his power to satisfy his long cherished feelings of hatred and revenge!

These two men, who were both natives of Norwich, had served their apprenticeship together in that city under the same master; and their school-boy intimacy had there ripened into one of those friendships which are so often contracted in our youth, without regard to similarity either of character or principles. Robert was always mild, zealous, attentive, and submissive. Charles, ever violent, idle, careless, and unruly. At the expiration of two years, the former had become almost his master’s confidential head man; whilst the latter gave no signs either of usefulness for the present or promise for the future. Hence, no doubt, first originated the jealousy which Charles even then felt for the companion of his childhood; a jealousy which afterwards grew into intense hatred, from a rivalry in love, in which Robert bore off the palm.

Of this hatred the honest fellow who was now conducting the friend of his boyhood to his happy home, never had had the slightest suspicion. He loved Charles, in spite of his faults, with the affection of a brother ; and though he could not avoid observing things in his comrade's conduct which met with his disapproval, he placed it all to the account of a too lively and too facile disposition, and was ever ready to find excuses for the scrapes and difficulties in which such conduct too frequently involved him ; and when, at the end of his apprenticeship, he came to London, he felt not a little hurt that Charles did not reply to any of the brotherly and affectionate letters which he from time to time transmitted.

But Charles had at this time other matters to engage his attention. Freed from the ascendancy which, in spite of himself, the honest straightforwardness of his companion had exercised over his vicious propensities, no sooner had Robert departed, than he gave rein to them with an unsparing hand. Frequenting low public-houses, and passing the greater part of his days and nights in drinking, and that species of gambling which is generally permitted and even encouraged in such places, he at length had recourse to theft to supply the vacuum in his resources which his idleness and dissipation had created.

Discovery quickly followed ; he was tried and condemned to two years' imprisonment in the county gaol. The lessons and example of the society into which he fell during his incarceration completely extinguished every feeling of honour or honesty which might have remained to him. Scouted from his native city when liberated, he travelled to London, and soon became one of a lawless band, who live by preying upon their fellow men, and stop not short even of murder, if their necessities or their safety seem to demand it.

Having arrived at his house, and partaken of a hearty but plain supper with his old companion, Robert addressed him as follows :—

“ Charles,” said he, “ I have continually more work offered to me than I can well get through with ; if you choose to do a part of it for me, I will engage to assure you a sufficient and respectable livelihood.”

Ever since he had entered the room, Charles had unceasingly, when he thought himself unobserved, continued to cast furtive glances on the wife of his friend.

She was still handsome ; handsomer, he thought, than ever ; and the miserable man felt his desire for revenge renewed with tenfold strength as he gazed upon her graceful figure and lovely countenance. He accepted the offer.

For some days he brought back the work entrusted to his care with the greatest punctuality. His motive for this was the hope of finding Catherine alone, that he might attempt her seduction; but Robert, who never visited the beer-shop or the public-house, was always at home, and at length, seeing the inutility of his device, and preferring to live in idleness, Charles neglected his work, applied for it more rarely, and several times presented himself in a state of intoxication.

Robert expostulated with him; but he only answered with an air of raillery, and at last, pretending to resent what he called an impertinent interference with his habits, he told his benefactor that he would work for him no more, and left the house with a threat upon his lips and hatred in his heart. But, alas! for this unfortunate family, it was fated that he should return too soon.

The gang of which Charles was a member invariably took the precaution, before they entered upon any of their burglarious enterprises, to choose some person who was a stranger to them, upon whom the suspicion of having committed the deed should be thrown. And this person they managed to compromise to a greater or less extent, at all events for a time, and thus put the officers of justice on a false scent, so that they

might have the power, meanwhile, of disposing of their plunder, and obliterating all traces of the really guilty party.

A bold *coup* was at this moment in preparation. They had determined to break into, and rob the house of an old gentleman, one of the partners in a celebrated firm in the city, who lived in St. John's-wood, and who, they had received certain information, had within the few preceding days received a large sum in cash, which he had not banked, but still kept at his residence.

They had already acquired the means of introducing themselves into the house, and Charles, who was a party to their deliberations, undertook to furnish the unfortunate victim upon whom the suspicions of justice should fall.

Eight days after his quarrel with Robert, he again presented himself in Rosamond-street, telling his friend that he came to acknowledge his error, and to implore his pardon. Robert, whose heart still retained all its former affectionate feeling for the companion of his childhood, shook him warmly by the hand, and entreated him to think no more of the matter; in short, to forget it, even as he had already forgotten it.

They sat for some time chatting together, and, at last, Charles said, "Robert, you have it in your power to do me considerable service!

Messrs. M***** and Company, the city jewellers, are in want of an assistant. I am sure I could obtain the situation if I had your good word, for you have frequently done work for them, and I know they think very highly of you."

"Well," replied the unsuspecting Robert, "I'm sure I shall be very happy to do anything to forward your interests, Charles."

"Thankye," rejoined the other; "old Mr. M***** has told me to call on him to-night, at eight o'clock, at his private house in St. John's-wood, to get an answer about the matter; and, if you would go with me, and speak in my favour, I've no doubt but I should succeed."

"With pleasure!" answered Robert.

"Very well," said Charles, "then, as I have a call to make this afternoon, suppose we appoint to meet at the corner of the Avenue-road, where he lives, at a quarter before eight."

"I will be punctual," replied Robert. And the villain left the house, exulting in the certainty of his benefactor's destruction.

As the chapel clock struck the three-quarters after seven, Robert, exact to his time, reached the place appointed. It was almost deserted. Scarcely a soul passed during the following half hour that he kept walking up and down, waiting

for Charles, and wondering what could have detained him.

The night was dark and foggy. At last he heard footsteps approaching, and, taking it for granted that this must be his friend, he ran quickly to meet him; but, at the moment that they came face to face, the other party, who proved to be a stranger, rushed against him with such evidently premeditated violence, that Robert seized the man's arm—high words were exchanged, a blow was made at him, and ultimately, in the struggle which ensued, his hat was knocked, or fell, off from his head. Robert, though completely taken by surprise, laid about him vigorously, and, after a few blows, his adversary took to flight, and disappeared in the darkness. Quite unable to comprehend the motive for this mysterious attack, and concluding that the man must have been intoxicated, the first thing which Robert did was to search for his hat. It was nowhere to be found! After vainly looking for it for some minutes, he made up his mind that, after all, it must have been a thief who had thus waylaid him, and hearing the chapel clock strike nine, he presumed that some unforeseen circumstance had prevented Charles from keeping his appointment, and started, bare-headed, on his road home, where he arrived without further hindrance.

The next day, as Robert was returning from the city to his lodgings, wondering within himself that he had, as yet, neither heard nor seen anything of Charles since the previous afternoon, his attention was suddenly arrested, as he was crossing Clerkenwell-green, by a man with a parcel of papers in his hand, who was surrounded by a crowd of idlers and passers by ; and who, after the usual fashion of such street criers, was vociferating concerning a " full, true, and particular account of a most horrible murder committed last night at eight o'clock, upon the person of Mr. M*****, of the Avenue-road, St. John's-wood, senior partner in the great jewellers' establishment of M***** and Company, in the city.

Excessively surprised, Robert bought a copy of the hand-bill and took it home with him. He had hardly been within doors ten minutes, and had only just finished reading the horrible recital, to which he must almost, as it were, have been a witness, when a violent knocking was heard at the door.

His wife opened it, and four policemen entered.

Robert rose and advanced toward them for the purpose of inquiring their business.

" Seize that man," said the serjeant to his subordinates.

" Me !" said Robert, recoiling with astonishment.

"Him!" exclaimed Catherine, his wife.

"Yes, him!"

"And for what?"

"For what?" rejoined the serjeant; "you need hardly ask that question, I should think, especially with that paper in your hand; which, if you were even ignorant of the business before, would tell you all about it."

"Me—me—!" exclaimed the unhappy man, as the frightful reality burst at once upon his view!

"Yes, you! Now, we have no time to spare. Come, you are our prisoner, you must go with us instantly!" And, in spite of his protestations of innocence—in spite of the entreaties and prayers of his agonised wife, Robert was handcuffed and carried off to prison.

He was taken before a magistrate for examination: to his horror and consternation, his hat, stained with blood, was brought in evidence against him. It was found in the neighbouring garden, and had his name and address written in the lining. A handkerchief also was picked up there, which he acknowledged was his, though how it came in that place he could not tell. A knife, which had Robert's initials carved upon the handle, and was sworn to as having belonged to him, and had been seen

in his possession but the day previous, was likewise found, covered with gore, in the murdered man's house.

In addition to this, several persons gave evidence to the effect that they had seen him walking up and down in front of the house in St. John's-wood, just before the time when the crime must have been committed. Others, again, testified that they had met him, on that very night, returning home without a hat; and a letter was produced at his second examination, which was sworn to by Mr. M*****'s partners, as having been in his pocket-book when he left the city, only three hours before he was assassinated. The pocket-book had been taken away by the murderers, and had not been recovered; but this letter had been found in the passage of the house in Rosamond-street, where Robert lodged, within half an hour after he had passed through it in custody of the policemen.

It was in vain that the unfortunate man asserted his innocence, and gave an explanation of the circumstances which had taken him to the neighbourhood at that hour; some search, indeed, was made for the man he designated as Charles, but as he was not to be found, the story was utterly disbelieved by the authorities, and Robert Laing was tried and *condemned to death!*

But, in the interval betwixt his sentence and execution, Charles, who being personally unknown to the police, believed himself safe from pursuit, was, with three of his accomplices, arrested in the very act of committing another burglary. They were all tried and convicted, when one of them, struck with remorse, at the very moment when he was about to be conveyed on board the vessel which was to bear him for ever from his native land, revealed the names of the real murderers of Mr. M*****, and made a full confession of the means they had used to attach suspicion to an innocent man. The circumstances were investigated at the Home-office, and Robert received a free pardon ; but *yon* miserable wretch, on finding that the revenge he had so dearly paid for had escaped his grasp, and weakened, perhaps, by long confinement, was seized with brain fever, which left him the helpless mass of imbecility you now behold him ! He was placed at the bar, found "Not guilty," on the ground of insanity, and, as is usual in such cases, removed to this place, where he will remain a prisoner for life.

But, alas ! when Robert re-entered his once-happy home, he found that his wife, unable to bear up against the sad tidings of his condemnation, had, a month before, put an end to her existence ! His two children, bereft of their

natural protectors, and treated as the offspring of a robber and murderer, had already advanced more than one step in vice and crime ; and he, himself, everywhere repulsed by a social state of things which cannot pardon even an honest man who has been unjustly accused, was borne down to the grave with misery and want, only living long enough to see his son sink into the lowest depths of vice and debauchery, and his daughter—the lost creature you beheld the other evening—for that daughter was Eliza !



CHAPTER VII.

“ But shall I mix in this unhallow’d crew ?
May *rosin’d* lightning blast me if I do !”

BORROWED FROM CHRYSOSTOM !!!

BOZ AND MAZZINI—THE INTERVIEW—THE SECRET
ASSOCIATION—THE CONSPIRATOR’S VENGEANCE.

It is just eight days since Boz and Mr. Mazzini shook hands with each other at the bottom of Portland-place ; we now find them seated *tête-à-tête*, in the library at Devonshire-terrace.

Two cups of exquisite Mocha, and a quarter box of Thomas’s magnificent regalias, are on the table. The Italian is seated on the left of the fire-place, puffing away as none but a Turk, or a Spaniard, or an Italian can puff, occasionally regaling his very lungs with an inflation of tobacco. Boz is on the right, in his favourite position, in his favourite crimson arm-chair, gently passing forth the smoke from his half-closed lips, and watching,

with a sort of dreamy interest, the thousand fantastic shapes which it assumes in its progress to the ceiling.

For the last two hours the great conspirator had been detailing to the great romancer the history of that formidable association of which he is so prominent a member.

"Mazzini," said our author at length—rousing himself from the state of profound and beatific contemplation into which his friend's recital, and the fragrant fumes of his truly regal regalia had thrown him—"Mazzini, this colossal society of yours is really a wonderful idea, and your description of its vast resources and ramifications, is startlingly interesting; but, still—however noble your purpose—however good your cause—I cannot agree with you as to the propriety of using some of the expedients which you tell me you systematically adopt for its advancement—calumny, for instance!"

"And why not calumny?" demanded the Italian; "does not the end justify the means? Yes—yes—a thousand times yes! Better that some should fall than all should remain slaves! Besides, we use these means only against those who are our enemies—and, therefore, enemies to the emancipation of their race!"

"But you treat all as your enemies who differ

with you as to the time and mode of effecting this emancipation?"

"We do. We will have no divided councils—no lukewarm supporters! The good cause has more frequently been ruined by them, than by the open foeman. Did ever General gain a victory who allowed his troops to marshal themselves, and march at what pace they pleased? No! All who do not keep step with us, all whose hearts do not beat in time and unison with ours, we utterly reject. Many men among our adversaries are advocates of a certain degree of progress; but a progress without energy, without courage, without the determination to reach the goal. Such men are often honourable, always conscientious; but we want none of them—we eschew them—we treat them as our worst enemies! All who are not for us, are against us; and we leave no stone unturned to work their ruin."

"'Tis a terrible association!"

"Terrible only in its justice; for the good of humanity is its sole end and aim. All who join us are made aware of the conditions on which they do so, and the laws by which, in their every action, they must henceforth submit to be governed."

"And if they transgress these laws, what is the punishment?"

“Death!”

“Death!” echoed our author.

“Yes, death,” replied Mazzini; “and no place in Europe can shield the traitor from our vengeance.”

“But your open enemies, as you term them—those who, having never joined your society, are not amenable to its laws—how do you proceed against them when they render themselves obnoxious to your designs, or possess the power to thwart your progress?”

“Humph!” said the Italian, ruminating for a moment; “I’ll relate you the history of an occurrence which took place in Bavaria some few years since, and then you will be enabled to judge for yourself.”

THE CONSPIRATOR’S VENGEANCE.

Six years ago I was at Munich, to which city I had travelled for the purpose of establishing a branch of our association. Many young students had enrolled themselves as members, and in no spot in all Europe could I boast a band of more courageous, more devoted, and more enthusiastic adherents.

One young fellow named Edgar T——, was especially distinguished for his ardent patriotism,

so much so, that we were frequently obliged to restrain and warn him, lest his imprudent language should betray us. He was intimate with, and in the habit of visiting at, the house of an old nobleman named R——z, who occupied the eminent post of Councillor of State. This nobleman had two sons whom we much wished, but had not hitherto been able, to prevail upon to join us; for the opinions and prejudices which they inherited from their father held deep root in their minds. One night, on his departure from the house in which we held our conferences, Edgar happened to meet Count R——z, who, on seeing him leave the door, questioned him closely concerning the motives which had led him to that place, and told him that if he continued to mix himself up with these secret societies which were forbidden by the Government, he should take means to put a stop to what he termed such boyish fooleries, and crush the evil in its bud.

Edgar, full of enthusiastic recollections of the great project which we had been debating, answered the old councillor with a warmth and an incaution which revealed enough of our plans and objects to give the wily statesman a complete insight into the rest.

The German Governments have no greater liking for conspirators than any others, and the

next day Edgar was arrested. About this period I quitted Munich, and, for a time, lost sight of the affair altogether ; but two years afterwards I was made acquainted with what I am about to relate to you.

A few weeks after my departure Edgar was set at liberty. The association had suffered little from the revelations he had so inadvertently made ; nothing of consequence had been discovered ; and the young neophyte, more ardent than ever in our cause, began to revolve in his mind the scheme of a dark project of vengeance.

This project he was not long in putting into execution. A short time after I had left, strange and singular reports began to circulate through Munich relative to the old Councillor of State. No one knew by whom they had been first set afloat, but every day they gathered new force and consistency. His reputation was attacked ; his honour was called in question ; and though at first little attention was paid to them, the whispers were so frequently repeated—these dark rumours were circulated with such audacity and apparent confidence in their truth—that the Government was obliged to listen to them. It did more—it evinced serious uneasiness on the subject, and Count R— z, lately so honoured, was dismissed, and retired in disgrace from the post which he

had so long occupied at the council-table of his Sovereign.

About the same time, the enticements to his sons to join the association were again renewed. They were now much more disposed to listen to our propositions, and ultimately eagerly consented to enter a society which professed itself inimical to a Government that had behaved with such ingratitude to their parent.

Edgar was a man who was terrible in his hates ; He had destroyed the father ; he swore to be the destruction of the children too, and fearfully he kept his oath.

His boldness and fervid eloquence had raised him to the leadership of the association in Munich, and his influence over its deliberations and resolutions was absolute and complete.

The Germans are a grave, taciturn, and serious people ; and a man of action, like Edgar, naturally took the lead among them. The sons of Count R——z, burning with hatred against the Government, eagerly seconded all the revolutionary measures which he proposed.

With the greatest address, and as if it were merely a tribute to their superior rank, he managed to place them in the forefront of every enterprise ; and when all was prepared for the execution of his scheme, he advanced a proposi-

tion for an open, armed revolt against their rulers, which, after a short debate, was unanimously adopted.

The old Councillor's two sons were among its most ardent supporters, and were nominated to the joint chieftainship of the enterprise. Their father, totally ignorant of all that was passing, and believing that his unhappiness had reached its climax in the disgrace that had overtaken him, thought but of enjoying his few remaining days in quiet retirement in the society of his children.

They thought but of avenging him !

The day after the revolt was decided on, it took place, and, by a coincidence of unforeseen circumstances, was well nigh proving completely successful. The attack was made with such secrecy, that the Government, taken quite by surprise, trembled for its existence.

The gallant old Count, however, forgetting the wrongs he had suffered, scorning to recollect aught but the fact that his Sovereign was in danger, came forward, and offered his services to quell the tumult, organised a masterly defence, led the troops in person against the rebels, and vanquished them.

But the two brothers were taken prisoners, and the day after the victory, the Count had the misery of learning that both his children were

confined in a dungeon, and had been the leaders of the revolt.

Their trial was short, but decisive; and, in spite of the prayers and supplications of their father for mercy, they were condemned to death—shot; and their wretched parent, within three months after, worn down with grief and misery, followed them to the grave.



CHAPTER VIII.

“ Fortune ! That jilt who crowns to-day our joys,
To-morrow all our happiness destroys ;
Frowns on the very object which she bless’d,
And ruins most those whom she most caress’d.”

DRYDEN.

“ But women, that inconstant kind,
Can ne’er fix in one place their mind.”

DUCHESS OF NEWCASTLE, 1645.

THE SYRIAN FRATRICIDES — THE STROLL — THE
STORY—THE TOOTHACHE—THE CIGAR.

ONE evening Boz and Mr. Phillipson were, according to custom, traversing the streets of London in search of “ *character*.” They were passing along Piccadilly.

Boz was walking several paces behind his Secretary ; for, though he had found this gentleman excessively useful to him, he could not divest himself of a certain emotion of dislike and disgust which he always felt at being publicly seen in the man’s society.



The Tyren Fratricides

The Secretary seemed almost as if he understood and comprehended this; for, instead of offering his patron his arm, as formerly, he now invariably took the lead, and kept himself a short distance in front.

But, at this moment, not hearing the well-known tramp, tramp, tramp, in his rear, Mr. P. turned round to ascertain where, and for what purpose, our author might be loitering.

Retracing his steps for a few yards, he beheld Boz with his nose glued against the window of a cigar shop! The Secretary peeped over his companion's shoulder, and on gazing into the place, a slight exclamation of surprise escaped him.

"Eh!" said our author, "do you know them?"

"Yes, extremely well; but I didn't know that they were *here*."

Behind the counter were seated two young girls. Both were excessively handsome, and so much like each other that it would have been difficult to distinguish them apart.

"They are lovely creatures!" exclaimed the Illustrious, as he and Mr. Phillipson left the window and walked on together.

"They are," replied the Secretary.

"Their countenances are decidedly foreign! Are they English?"

"No, Italians! And, strange to say, though

you now see them keeping a cigar shop, those two women, some years ago, did as much to subvert Austrian ascendancy in Italy, as all the Carbonieri put together."

"Indeed!"

"Yes. I'll tell you the story as we walk along; and if your ideas for the plot of your new Tale tend in the direction which I suspect—"

"Ideas for the plot of my new Tale?" interrupted the Illustrious. "Why I've not mentioned anything which could lead you to suppose—"

"No," replied the Secretary, with a sly smile; "but Mr. Mazzini has been repeatedly closeted with you lately, and you have a habit of sometimes muttering to yourself—" And he stopped significantly.

"Confound this fellow, I must have a care of him," thought our author; and then telling Mr. Phillipson to go on with his story, that astute gentleman related to him the following tale:—

Some years ago, Colonel ——, an old soldier of the French Empire and an ardent republican, viewing with disgust the slight results which the revolution of 1830 had produced, went to Italy for the purpose of trying if he could not rekindle a patriotic feeling in the breasts of the descendants of old Rome.

He found the Italian youth, however, much

more deeply occupied with pleasure than conspiracy. Some few associations existed it is true, but they had little hold of natures more fond of voluptuous pleasures than the enjoyment of liberty.

One day, he met on the sea shore, near Venice, a man and two girls; they were wandering musicians—the man played on the guitar, and the girls, who appeared to be not more than fifteen years of age, sang and danced—receiving in recompence anything which the passers by chose to give them.

The Colonel was much struck with the figures and faces of these two girls. You have just seen them, therefore I may save myself the trouble of sketching you their portraits.

In spite of the rags in which they were clothed, there was so much grace and elegance in their manner, that the old soldier said to himself, “Here, now, are a couple of females who could do more for their country than all the most eloquent and enthusiastic tirades that one could utter! And why should they not? Misery, ambition, patriotism even, might tempt them—who knows?”

He drew the man aside and spoke to him; and that same evening they were seen conversing eagerly together in a coffee-house on the place of St. Mark.

Five days afterwards the man was spending money in all directions in the taverns of Venice. He was well dressed ; in fact, quite an altered person. But—he was alone.

In the year following, nothing was talked of in Ancona but the arrival of a rich Frenchman and his two beautiful daughters who had taken up their quarters at one of the first mansions in the city, and were giving parties and fêtes of the most *récherche* description, to which all the young noblemen of the city and neighbourhood were invited.

Some prudent persons, indeed, remarked that the two young French ladies spoke Italian much better than their native language ; but what did that matter to the young madmen who crowded admiringly round them, and to whom they were not at all backward in giving encouragement.

Before a month had passed away, the sons of all the best families in the marches of Ancona had ranged themselves under the banners of these goddesses of the moment ; but, in the midst of all their frivolity, the Signoras Rosita and Bianca (as they Italianised their names of Rose and Blanche) showed that they were occupied with ideas of a more serious nature. Their adorers were often not a little astonished to find them absolutely evincing greater ardour than them-

selves in their aspirations after the liberties of Italy; and, to find favour in their eyes, these young men scrupled not to second and applaud even their most violent attacks against the iron despotism which Austria exercised over their unhappy country.

From the moment of their arrival, Colonel — (for you have no doubt recognised him) found himself surrounded by champions the most ardent in the cause of young Italy. Secret meetings had repeatedly been held at his house, and numerous affiliations had taken place; but, immersed in pleasure, and held back by the fear of the consequences which would ensue to their families, the youthful conspirators showed little disposition for open resistance or revolt.

Yet soon afterwards, awakened from their lethargy by a few of their more zealous associates, and, above all, led on by the powerful attractions of these two charming girls, who promised to refuse nothing to those who should show themselves most ardent in the cause of liberty, they all ranged themselves under the banners of independence, and many, 'tis said, were most loyally and faithfully recompensed.

One day as these lovely signoras were returning in their carriage from a morning drive, surrounded, as usual, by a numerous and gallant

escort, who were prancing along by the sides of their equipage, a man rushed towards the coach door, loudly calling them by name. On seeing him they, for a moment, trembled and turned deadly pale, but with a rapid gesture ordered the coachman, who was about to stop, to drive on.

The carriage whirled forward with the speed of lightning. The man rushed after it, still crying—
“Rosita ! Bianca !—Rosita ! Bianca !”

“Who is that beggarly fellow ?” inquired one of the *cavalieri serviente* of Rosita.

“Doubtless some impertinent mendicant,” replied she, concealing her agitation with a smile.

“Away, rascal ! away !” cried the young noble ; and, as the man still continued to advance, he cut him across the face with his riding whip.

The others applauded.

The two sisters started on witnessing the blow, but quickly repressed the emotions that agitated them.

The miserable man was struck to the earth ; but, after covering his ensanguined features for a moment with his hands, he rose, and continued his desperate course after the carriage.

The equipage arrived at their mansion. The two sisters gave strict orders that the doors should be closed against all persons but those known to the servants.

That night they took counsel together.

This was the man who had parted with them to the Colonel, who had made them rich fine ladies.

Their present mode of life pleased them not a little, and the future had, doubtless, even still higher destinies in reserve for them.

It was necessary, therefore, to get rid of him.

Should they apply to the Colonel to give him more gold ?

When once it was spent he would again return, and perhaps reveal who and what they really were !

But one means remained !

The next day the dead body of a man was found in one of the streets of Ancona. He had been stabbed to the heart !

No great notice was taken of the affair ; some people, indeed, whispered that they had seen this same person repeatedly driven from the door by the Colonel's servants, and that they had heard him exclaim, " My sisters ! my sisters !—Rosita ! Bianca !—my sisters !"

For this man was their brother !

" Their brother," cried Boz, staggering back, and nearly falling through the large panes of Swan and Edgar's window !

" Their own brother," rejoined Mr. Phillipson.

"Some time afterwards the revolt broke out in Ancona; the result of it you know!"

The Colonel, although dangerously wounded, managed to escape in company with his two daughters; of whose crime, however, he was wholly ignorant. He died almost immediately after reaching the frontier.

The two sisters took charge of his pocket-book and valuables, and went on to Paris, in which city they opened a milliner's shop, and carried on a great trade. I heard their story, and had them pointed out to me when I was there last summer. What has brought them to London I can't conceive, unless it be the idea that we Englishmen have more fools among us, with money to spend, than our neighbours."

"But," said our illustrious Boz, "how is it that, after a life of luxury and splendour, they can be satisfied with this sort of humdrum existence?"

"Humdrum existence!" echoed the Secretary; "did you examine the shop closely?"

"Well, no—not particularly."

"Ah! I thought not! I'll be bound that, if you had, you would have seen a side or back door!"

"Well?"

"Which, I'd lay a trifle, leads to an apartment

behind, or above stairs, furnished with Asiatic splendour, and in which—*you smoke!*” And the Secretary uttered this half inquiringly, half jeeringly, with a most appalling finesse.

After a short further stroll, our author bid Mr. Phillipson good evening. He had a toothache, *he said*, and was afraid of continuing out longer in the night air!

Whether our hero went into *the* shop in Piccadilly, *and bought a cigar on his way home, we know not!*

SMOKING *is the best thing in the world for the toothache!*



CHAPTER IX.

“ Oh, conscience
That well-kept register, wherein is writ
All ill men do, all goodness they omit.”

FROM AN HONEST ATTORNEY'S DIARY.

“ Still the trite proverb we should keep in view,
And ‘*sum cuique*’—give the devil his due.”

BORROWED FROM BLACKSTONE!!!

FURTHER RAMBLES IN SEARCH OF THE “ REAL ”
—THE BLINDFOLDING—THE REGISTRY-OFFICE
—THE BAR-MAID—THE WRITING-MASTER.

“ WHERE do we go this evening ?” asked our author of his Secretary, as the latter entered.

“ To-night I propose to take you to see one of those institutions which pass for philanthropic and useful, and which the public patronise because they believe that they find their account in it. But it is necessary that you should consent to a certain slight formality which I am necessitated to impose upon you.”

“ And what may that formality be ?”

"That you will permit me to bandage your eyes during our journey thither and back ; for, though I am most willing to aid you in your researches, I do not wish that you should have it in your power to reveal the sources of those facts which I bring before you. Moreover, you will, by this means, be relieved of any feeling of complicity which you might otherwise entertain, at the idea of being privy to such things, without revealing your information to the authorities."

"But—" said Boz.

"I understand your hesitation," interrupted the Secretary ; "you are asking yourself at this moment what confidence you can have in me, seeing me thus associated and intimate with all that shuns the light of day. Now, I don't feel at all hurt by this suspicion ; on the contrary, I think it very natural : but, for the present, you must be contented to hear no more than that I have a very great interest in rendering you these services, and none whatever in deceiving you."

"Be it as you will," said our author, after a moment's pause ; "I am ready to accompany you."

When Boz had got into the cab, Mr. Phillipson whispered an address in the driver's ear, and, after placing himself by his patron's side, proceeded, as the carriage drove off with them, to

bandage that gentleman's eyes with a large muffler, which he produced from his coat pocket.

As the cab stopped, the Secretary gave his hand to assist his companion to alight, and knocked at a door, which was opened almost instantly; and it was not until they had entered, and this door was closed behind them, that he proceeded to remove the bandage.

Our author, on recovering his vision, gave a rapid glance around, and ascertained that he was in a long narrow passage, which was dimly lighted by a lamp which was hung against the wall, about half way down.

"Is there any one in the office?" demanded Mr. Phillipson of an ugly old crone, who came forth from a side door at which he softly tapped.

"Yes, sir, my mistress is at home!" replied the woman, with a most respectful air. "Shall I bring you a light, sir?"

The Secretary without reply took the candle from her hand, and leading the way down the passage, proceeded, followed by our hero, up a narrow flight of stairs, at the top of which he stopped before a door on which the word "office" was painted in large Roman letters, and, turning the handle, went in.

A female about forty years of age met them almost at the entrance. She had her bonnet and

shawl on as if just prepared to go out. On seeing Mr. Phillipson she curtsied, almost, as it seemed, with a sort of fear ; and, with a glance at our author, said, " Have you any commands for me, sir ?"

" No, madam," replied the Secretary ; " be so good as to give me the key of number five."

Taking a key from her pocket, she presented it to him.

" That will do," said Mr. Phillipson, indicating by a gesture that he did not require her further presence.

She curtsied again, and as she left the room threw another searching glance on our author's countenance.

" Who is that woman ?" inquired our hero, when she had quitted the apartment.

" One whose youth and prime has been passed in scenes more exciting than ever even your imagination could dream of. She has made no little noise in her time, though she now lives here, and attends to this office for the modest stipend of forty pounds per annum. But I will relate her history to you at some future period."

" What office is this ?" asked our author, gazing round the room, and at the large ledger-looking books with which that part of it enclosed behind the desk was lined.

"It is a 'General Registry Office for Servants;' in short, for any body and every body who may be seeking employment, no matter what their occupation; and it is as well frequented and supported as any one of these numerous large establishments throughout London."

"Ah! I have often heard of these places, but I never visited one of them before."

"Just cast your eyes over this register," said Mr. Phillipson, taking down a large volume, which he laid before our author; and then, with the aid of key number five, opened a door almost concealed in the wall, and disappeared through it.

The illustrious Boz, on looking through the register, found that it consisted of nothing but an enormous number of names alphabetically arranged, and under each of which certain notes were written, apparently explanatory of the character and qualifications of the different parties.

"Well, what think you of that?" inquired the Secretary, as he returned with another large volume in his hand.

"I see nothing here but a vast number of names, which are perfectly unknown to me, and about which there seems to me to be little of mystery or interest," replied our hero.

"Ah, well!" said Mr. Phillipson, with a smile. "Now just be so good as to read me one or two

of those names with the notes attached to them, and I will then read you certain other unpublished indications of the same parties, which are contained in this volume."

Our author, turning over a leaf or two, commenced at hazard as follows:—

"Maria Smith, barmaid; excellent references to some of the first houses in the trade; sober, steady, writes a very good hand, and of unexceptionable honesty."

Mr. Phillipson turned to the letter S in his register, and read—

"Maria Smith, *alias* the Gipsy, clever at the till, can always average 15 per cent. from the takings, very artist like, lived at the A—Arms four years—landlord bankrupt in consequence—but never found out how it came to pass—only fault, gets drunk sometimes, has scruples, very useful on great 'plants,' ought to be reserved for them."

The illustrious Boz stared at Mr. Phillipson with unbounded astonishment.

"Go on to another," said the latter.

Our author re-opened the register, and read again—

"William Jackman, copyist and short-hand writer, has had great practice in decyphering ancient manuscripts—is acquainted with the Ger-

man, Greek, and Hebrew characters—wishes employment as secretary or amanuensis to a literary or political gentleman, and can furnish the very best references.”

When our illustrious hero stopped, Mr. Philipson proceeded—

“ William Jackman, *alias* ‘ The Writing-master,’ imitates all sorts of hands to perfection—counterfeits signatures with the nicest exactitude—has also frequently sent forged acceptances into the market—ought to be placed with some one of good expectancies who is in difficulties—if he refuses—can have him arrested on a charge of forgery, without compromising the association !”

“ Why, good God !” cried the Illustrious, with horror, “ this is neither more nor less than an infamous trap.” And can you make yourself a party to such dreadful proceedings, Mr. Phillipson ?”

“ Allow me, sir, to recall to your remembrance, that you have promised to suspend your judgment with regard to me, until I have revealed to you who and what I am,” said the Secretary.

“ Ah, true, so I did !”

“ I have now placed before your view another of the ‘ realities ’ of London,” proceeded this strange man : “ this is a place to which people

are every day having recourse, and by which they are almost invariably made the victims. Whenever the association wishes to 'plant' a 'friend' in any house upon which it may have designs, recourse is had to these secret registers, with the existence of which the chiefs of the band alone are acquainted."

"And are there no complaints made to the police concerning this horrible scheme?"

"The police would not be able to find any positive proof here. Besides, the association always takes the greatest care to protect its members by every possible means; and even when any of them are caught, which not unfrequently happens, they can make no discoveries; for, as I told you just now, they are, themselves, ignorant of the existence of this private register!"

Mr. Phillipson proceeded to replace the book in the closet from whence he had brought it; and then, taking the candle, directed his steps towards the door.

Our author followed him, buried in reflections, the result of which the reader will be made acquainted with in the ensuing chapter. Suffering his eyes to be rebound in the lower passage, he was driven off in the cab that awaited them, and on his sight being restored, found himself once more at the corner of Devonshire-terrace.

"Good night, sir," said the Secretary.

"Good night! Be with me early to-morrow," replied Boz, as he walked up the carriage-drive to his door.



CHAPTER X.

“L'adresse est de choisir le trait qu'on vent lancer,
Qu'il effleure en volant et pique sans blesser.
Fuyez donc le sarcasme et ses ris indiscrets,
L'amour propre offensé ne pardonne jamais,
Ménagez-lui toujours une heureuse retraite
Que l'objet du bon mot, lui même le épète.”

(PILFERED.)

THE DENOUEMENT—THE DISCHARGE—THE WHIS-
PER—THE POLICEMAN—THE END.

Our author and his Secretary were seated, as on the day on which this history commenced, in the illustrious romancer's library. Nothing was changed; the desk still stood on the right hand side of the window; the crimson-cushioned arm-chair occupied its usual position near the fireplace, and the or-molu dial on the mantelpiece marked half-past eleven A.M. precisely.

The Illustrious was moody and taciturn. The playing of a certain well-known tune, called th devil's tattoo, with his fingers upon the table, denoted that he was also somewhat agitated. He

H

looked pale and anxious ; and at intervals, from time to time, cast a furtive glance at his companion.

Mr. Phillipson noted it all, but said nothing.

At length our author broke silence. " Sir," said he, opening one of his writing-table drawers, " how much do I owe you ?"

However impassible the Secretary might have appeared up to this moment, he was somewhat taken aback at this brusque question, especially as it was put in a tone which admitted of no debate.

" Why, really, I don't exactly know," half stammered out Mr. P.

" How much do I owe you, sir ?" repeated Boz.

" Well, say twenty pounds," replied the Secretary, seeing that he could hesitate no longer.

Boz took out a bank-note of that amount, and handed it to his companion, who accepted it with a smile.

" And now," said our author, in the same cool imperious tone, " you have performed all the services for me which I shall require ; you have been paid for those services, and nothing remains but that I bid you good day."

Mr. Phillipson smiled again, but did not budge a step.

Our renowned romancer appeared to be on the

point of losing his temper. "Did you not hear me, sir?" said he.

"I did."

"Then why—"

"Because my mission has not yet *quite* terminated."

"What mean you?"

"That I have yet to make known to you *who* and *what* I am."

"*Who* you are, sir, I care little to ascertain; *what* you are sufficiently speaks for itself."

"Indeed it does not; for I entered your service in the performance of a high and important duty."

"A high and important duty?" echoed our hero, with inquiring astonishment.

"Yes, sir; and I am happy to have it in my power to say that I shall be able to give a satisfactory report about you."

"Favourable, satisfactory report, about me!" exclaimed our illustrious Quill, "why, the fellow must be mad!"

"No, sir, I am not mad," replied Mr. Phillipson, bristling up; "and if you knew who I was, you would not dare to insinuate such a thing."

"Who you are!" exclaimed our author, rapidly losing his temper at being thus spoken to by a Secretary; "and who—the—devil—are—you?"

“ Sir, I am one, the simple sound of whose voice has made hundreds tremble.”

“ What?”

“ Whose mere glance has made thousands quail. Sir, I am—” and, striding across the library towards the astonished Boz, Mr. Phillipson whispered for a moment in his ear.

Had the earth yawned beneath his feet—had Mr. Phillipson proclaimed himself to be the foul fiend in person—had an earthquake engulfed nine-tenths of the Regent’s-park, and left his library-chair, with himself in it, hanging over the brink of the abyss, our Colossus of Literature could not have evinced more horror than he did at that whispered announcement. He was stupefied—he was petrified.

“ Not more alarmed (pity the lines be lost !)
Was mad Orestes, when his mother’s ghost
Full in his face infernal torches tost.

Not with more horror did the devil look,
When Dunstan, by the nose, the demon took ;
As gravely say our legendary songs,
And led him with a pair of red-hot tongs.”

PILL GARLICK.

In fact, Sir G—— G—— having heard, with some alarm, that so influential a writer as Boz

had lately formed an intimacy with certain gentlemen holding very extreme opinions, took means, in order to ascertain the nature of that intimacy, to plant in his service as Private Secretary

ONE OF THE DETECTIVE POLICE !

We leave the great romancer fainting in his crimson-cushioned chair ; and our readers, we trust, enjoying the joke.

Since writing the above, we unfeignedly regret we have to announce to our readers, that such has been the effect of Mr. Phillipson's tutelage on the delicate celebral organisation of our hero, that he has been since, to all intents and purposes



A HAUNTED MAN !



THE MURDERER CHARLES.

NOTES.

Page 4.—"A manuscript slang dictionary (for the compilation of which the Illustrious Boz had paid the once-renowned Pierce Egan the handsome sum of one hundred guineas)," &c.

Martin Scævola tells us that there are in every language—ancient, modern, and intermediate—divers and sundry heterogeneous words, anomalous expressions ("Argot," as our Gallic neighbours term it—slang, flash, or kiddy, as the present fast English generation denominate it), which render them more difficult of comprehension to the tyro in colloquial familiarities than even the most licentious idiomatic phrases, or the most irregular combinations of sentences. Our readers must not, therefore, marvel that the illustrious Boz should disburse to his classic fellow-labourer in the field of literature the sum we have named in the text. Furthermore, it is a well known fact that Citizen Lord Brougham, previous to the publication of his famous pamphlet on the French Revolution, resided for a length of time in Buckridge-street, St. Giles's, *regardless of expense*, and subsequently in the Rue aux Ours, Quartier Latin, Paris, expressly to acquire a competent knowledge of the *argot* phraseology of Great Britain and France; to which sojourns may be traced his Lordship's much admired and unrivalled proficiency in slang verbiage.

Page 7.—"He pushes his profession as a swell-mob's-man, and intimates that he can put you 'fly,' " &c., &c.

"Apropos des mouches." We cannot do better, we think, than extract a few lines from an ancient classic, extenuating the practice of *slang* quotations, and which, we trust, will be accepted as an excuse for our sins on this head:—"Several poets and other writers possessed of no natural sublimity, or rather strangers to it, have very frequently made use of common and vulgar terms, that have not the least air of elegance to recommend them; yet by musically disposing and artfully connecting such terms, they clothe their periods in a kind of factitious pomp and exaltation, and dexterously conceal their intrinsic lowness."—LONGINUS!! Epith. viii., 27.

Page 12.—"Their feet lead down to death, their steps take hold on hell."

Our readers will, we trust, excuse us for introducing in our pages the above quotation. It was, however, so peculiarly applicable to the subject of which we were writing, that we could not refrain from so doing, and from extracting the following few lines from an unpublished sermon of our facetious and gifted friend, Dr. Richardson:—"Their feet lead down to death. Oh, my dearly beloved brethren! visit the Casino, the Minerva Ball, the Walhalla, the Bal Negligé, the Elysium! Watch the lascivious gyrations and the lewd posturings of the coryphees therein assembled; observe the *simple-minded young men* who are thereby drawn into misery and ruin; watch all this, and then deny, if you can, that they do lead to death. Be not

led astray, oh, my brethren, by the effete eulogiums of Albert Smith on the ballet girls of London, for 'there is more in them than meets the eye.'"—RICHARDSON'S SERMONS, vol. xxii.

Page 61.—"Charles, who was a party to their deliberations, undertook to furnish the unfortunate victim upon whom the suspicions of justice should fall."

DISCLOSURES BY THE MURDERER BATES.—"Bates and Mawdesley, *alias* Walmsley, have confessed that they have been implicated in various highway robberies, and there is reason for believing that they are the parties who caused so much apprehension in the minds of the inhabitants of this neighbourhood last winter. At the last Liverpool Assizes two persons were tried and convicted of highway robbery, and sentenced to fifteen years' transportation. *These parties, it now turns out, were quite innocent*, for Bates and Walmsley have confessed that they *had laid a plant for them*, and that they themselves were the guilty parties," &c.—*Daily News*, April, 1848.

Page 77.—"Their trial was short, but decisive; and, in spite of the prayers and supplications of their father for mercy, they were condemned to death—shot."

If any reader be inclined to think this an exaggerated tale, we beg him to recollect that the very same circumstance which thus happened to the sons of Count R——z, also took place

with regard to the two Bandieras; a full account of which appeared in the journals of the day.

Some conspirators who seized a vessel, and landed in Calabria, for the purpose of raising the country, were taken prisoners by Admiral Bandeira.

The society of which these conspirators formed a part, swore to avenge the death of its members! The Admiral had two sons; they were young, easily persuaded to enter into the association, and soon proved themselves the most ardent of its members. Being purposely placed at the head of another projected attack upon Calabria, they were taken, condemned to be shot, and executed on the 25th of July, 1844.

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